

## VFW Reporting

By Glenn Della-Monica

The VFW collects data on activities involving individual members as well as Posts. The data helps the VFW at the state and national level understand what Posts are doing and it assists with planning and resource allocation.

More important than that is the support it gives to our state and national leaders when they lobby the state legislature or Congress regarding veteran-related bills.

Which carries more weight?

We have a lot of posts with bars and pool tables where veterans can gather and swap war stories.

OR

We have 1.7 million members who have raised tens of millions of dollars for veteran support, scholarship programs, first responder recognition and other direct support to charities. Our members have donated millions of hours to educational activities, patriotic activities, aid to the homeless and homebound, public safety and dozens of other activities. Our veteran members volunteer as scout leaders, youth mentors, community board and committee members and much, much more.

When you let your Post Commander or Auxiliary President know what you have done for your community, the information gets reported to the Department. This is far more important than many think, as these reports form the basis of our standing when we go before our elected representatives to lobby for laws and other support for our fellow veterans.

Another critical factor is that the IRS has given the VFW charitable status under one of the 501(C) sections of the Internal Revenue Code. To keep this status, the VFW needs to show the IRS what charitable activities its posts and individual members have accomplished. Reporting is the tool used to convey this information to the IRS.

You don't have to go looking for ways to volunteer. You are probably doing some already. Did you donate to a school sports team when they were selling discount coupon books or buy a box of Girl Scout Cookies? Did you visit a sick friend in the hospital or bring a meal to someone from church who was home sick? Do you volunteer with a city or town in a volunteer position on a board or committee? Did you write a letter to the editor asking for a new stop sign in town?

Below are the official reporting categories with a few examples of what can be reported. This list is not all-inclusive, and you should be aware that almost any service you provide to a town, charitable organization, hospital, school or needy individual is reportable.

In order to report any activities, all you need to do is let your Commander or President know a few simple things:

- The number of members performing the service
- The total number of hours (total of all members' hours)
- The total mileage, if any, involved (Miles driven times number of members)
- The total cost, if any, of the project, including the value of a hall rental, if applicable.
- The date of the event. If there was more than one date, list all dates.
- The total money raised from the event, if applicable.
- The nature of the event.
  - Include the number of people at the event, if applicable
  - Specify the number of veterans assisted
  - Specify the number of youth assisted
  - Give a one-or-two sentence description of the service you provided and a short description of the recipient(s)

Reports should be submitted by the end of the second week of each month, but if you have not reported something previously, feel free to do a catch-up report. The critical time is at the end of the VFW fiscal year, and all reports have to be in by April 15th.

Post Members may enter their own reports, too. The password is not listed here for security reasons, but your Post Commander will provide it on request. It only takes a minute to report anything.

If what you report is a Post function, you can claim time and mileage for all of the Post Members who participated in the meeting and/or event. You can also claim the value of the rental of your Post if you donate it for charitable purposes or use it to vote funding or support for a charitable cause at a meeting.

Time is generally reported in half-hour increments. You may notice that many events can be reported in more than one category. You can pick the one you want or split your time and funds between two or more categories, but you can't double dip and claim the total hours or funds twice.

Below are just a few of the literally tens of thousands of things that qualify for VFW reporting. The basic idea is that you or your Post did something for others, your community or your country that you were not paid to do, with a few exceptions. If a charity, town or other organization gives you a small stipend or parking/mileage reimbursement, you can report time and only expenses for which you were not reimbursed.

Remember, these represent only a tiny fraction of the possible things you can report. Be creative and think about all of the wonderful things you do every day.

## 1. AMERICANISM

- a. Loyalty Day
  - i. Your Post has a ceremony
  - ii. Your Post writes something for the newspaper and submits it regarding awards given at a Loyalty Day ceremony
- b. Memorial Day
  - i. You organize or participate a ceremony at a cemetery, bridge, park or other place
  - ii. You organize or march in a parade, either as an individual VFW Member or as a Post
- c. Flag Day
  - i. Same as Memorial Day
- d. Independence Day
  - i. Same as Memorial Day
- e. POW / MIA Day
  - i. Same as Memorial Day
- f. Veterans Day
  - i. Same as Memorial Day
  - ii. You visit vets at a nursing home, senior center or other place and give them recognition
- g. Pearl Harbor Day
  - i. Same as Memorial Day
  - ii.
- h. American or POW Flag Presentation
  - i. You give a flag to a veteran, school or other group
  - ii. You present a flag at a funeral, for a military unit deployment or return, during a ceremony to honor a veteran or his/her family
- i. Flag Raising / Flying
  - i. Any public ceremony where you or your Post is involved in raising the flag
  - ii. Time involved in flying a flag in public view at your residence (limited to actual time raising/lowering/replacing the flag)
- j. Color or Honor Guard
  - i. Participation in any event as a color guard
  - ii. Participation in any event as an honor guard
- k. Get out the Vote
  - i. GOTV campaigns, whether non-partisan or not
  - ii. Assisting your city or town with voting as a poll worker, registrar, etc, even if you receive a stipend
- l. Participating in Patriotic Assembly
  - i. Organizing a patriotic assembly not enumerated above, such as a 9-11 ceremony
  - ii. You promote, publicize or bring others to the ceremony
- m. Distributing Patriotic Literature

- i. Giving copies of the Constitution or Declaration of Independence to a school, church or other organization
    - ii. Providing materials to explain our founding documents to similar organizations
  - n. Conducted American or POW Flag Education
    - i. Publishing information in a local paper on how to display or dipose of the flag.
    - ii. Presenting a talk on the meaning of the US or POW Flags
  - o. Flag Disposal or Retirement
    - i. Picking up used flags and delivering them to a Post or other organization where they will be disposed of properly
    - ii. Taking part in a flag disposal ceremony
  - p. Parades
    - i. Organizing a parade
    - ii. Taking part in a parade as a VFW or affiliated organization or other veterans organization member
  - q. Other
    - i. Writing to your local newspaper about political or patriotic matters
    - ii. Encouraging your church leaders to have a ceremony or other event honoring the military, veterans, first responders, teachers, etc., or taking part in such a ceremony.
  - r. Patriots Day
    - i. Same as Memorial Day
    - ii. Running in the Boston Marathon with a VFW hat or shirt on, or otherwise identifying yourself as a veteran (or being on the support team for one who is doing such running)
    - iii. Supporting a charitable organization by sponsoring a runner who is raising money for the organization.
  - s. VFW Day
    - i. Same as Memorial Day
    - ii. Advertising a VFW Day event in the local paper
- 2. BUDDY POPPY
  - a. Distributing poppies
  - b. Purchasing poppies (# of members present at vote to buy poppies and their mileage is applicable)
- 3. COMMUNITY SERVICE
  - a. Organized or Assisted in Blood Drive
    - i. Help put on a blood drive
    - ii. Donate the Post for a drive location
    - iii. Volunteer to donate blood
  - b. Organized or Assisted with CPR or AED Class
    - i. Teach a class
    - ii. Donate the Post for a class location
  - c. Participated in Environmental Program

- i. Donate the Post for such an event
  - ii. Donate money or advertise such an event
  - iii. Install solar panels or a wind turbine and invite schools or the public to come and learn about them
- d. Other Community Involvement
  - i. Volunteer to serve on a town or city Board or Committee (Planning Board, ZBA, Conservation Committee, Budget Committee, etc)
  - ii. Help organize a community garden
  - iii. Teach a class at the Adult Ed program, library program, senior center or community center.
  - iv. Volunteer to pick up trash or do weeding at your local park or volunteer time to make park improvements.
- e. Make a Difference Day
- f. Cooperated in Other Organization's Fund Raiser
  - i. Donate money to another charitable organization
  - ii. Participate in a function to raise money or provide other support for a charitable organization
- g. United States Bond Program
  - i. Advertise the Bond program at your Post.
  - ii. Write a letter to the editor encouraging Bond purchase
- h. Other Cooperation Project
  - i. Help a charity put on an event
  - ii. Help advertise or participate in another Post or veterans organizations event or program
- i. Aid to Hospital or Nursing Home Volunteer
  - i. Donating goods or money to a hospital or nursing home
  - ii. Volunteering at a hospital or nursing home
- j. Aid to Senior Citizens
  - i. Putting on a program at a senior center
  - ii. Volunteering time at a senior center
  - iii. Taking a homebound senior a meal or taking him/her to lunch
  - iv. Taking time to visit a senior citizen just for company
  - v. Donating goods or money to a charity that supports senior citizens.
  - vi. Assisting a senior citizen with obtaining medical or other services or with housing.
  - vii. Just because a senior citizen is a friend does not mean that you cannot claim the time for assisting him/her. The goal is to be aware of needs and increase assistance.
- k. Aid to Person or Family with Tragedy or Illness
  - i. Bringing a meal to a family when a family member goes to the hospital or hospice
  - ii. Transporting someone to the hospital to see a family member or friend.

- iii. Providing time, goods or funding to assist an individual or family who has just had a death in the family.
- iv. Assisting a family with funeral arrangements.
- v. Providing funding so someone without means can get medical attention or medication.

I. Aid to Others

- i. Volunteering at a homeless shelter or community health center
- ii. Providing funding for a family in need
- iii. Donating blankets or clothing to an organization that distributes them to the needy
- iv. Volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen, or donating money or food to them

m. School or Church Mentor Program

- i. Mentoring individuals or groups.
- ii. When mentoring, always report the number of people in total and enumerate how many were children.

n. School or Church Speaker Program

- i. Speaking, especially on patriotic or veteran-related topics.
- ii. Always identify as a VFW Member when doing public speaking

o. Other School or Church Assistance

- i. Donating goods, services or funds to a church or school program (does not include normal tithing)
- ii. Volunteering as an after-school program adult sponsor or monitor
- iii. Donating to a church or school food pantry or school lunch program
- iv. Volunteering for a school booster club to support school activities
- v. Volunteering to set up, repair or upgrade computers or other technology

p. Cancer Organization Donations or Participation

- i. Participating in a fund-raising event
- ii. Donating goods or money
- iii. Volunteering at a hospice or hospital
- iv. Presenting cancer awareness/prevention information on behalf of a cancer organization
- v. Driving cancer patients to treatments

q. Dollar Per Member for Cancer and Research

- i. Organizing or participating in a dollar-per-member fundraiser event
- ii. Post membership voting to donate a dollar for each current member to be given to cancer research

4. SAFETY

a. Firefighter or Police Officer of the Year Award

- i. Soliciting nominations
- ii. Processing nominations
- iii. Participating in award ceremonies

- b. Pedestrian or Bicycle Safety
  - i. Donating materials or safety equipment (helmets, reflectors, lights, etc) to schools or rec centers for youth safety
  - ii. Participation in town or city discussions regarding bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, etc.
- c. Drug Awareness
  - i. Giving talks to schools and youth organizations
  - ii. Donating funds to awareness and prevention programs
  - iii. Working with law enforcement to report suspicious behavior that indicates drug trafficking
- d. Recreation, Boating or Hunting Safety
  - i. Presenting training
  - ii. Donating the Post for such training
  - iii. Volunteering as a lake or river volunteer host as part of boating safety or invasive plant watch.
  - iv. Donating youth water safety items to a family or organization that distributes them to families.
- e. Highway Safety
  - i. Participating in a town or city highway safety program, such as a town Highway Safety Committee
  - ii. Providing transportation for a stranded motorist to get gas.
  - iii. Helping change a tire or provide other mechanical assistance for a motorist.
  - iv. Writing a letter to the local paper about traffic safety.
  - v. Putting on a talk at a school, community center or church about traffic safety
  - vi. Writing a letter to the editor asking people not to back out of driveways when there are snow banks present, and to watch their speed when the roads are icy.
- f. Home / Fire Safety
  - i. Providing a fire extinguisher for a senior citizen who does not have one
  - ii. Assisting others with changing expired smoke detectors or helping them change the batteries on good ones.
  - iii. Helping others develop evacuation plans for fires and other disasters.
  - iv. Helping others develop emergency supplies, including first aid supplies and emergency food.
  - v. Helping others select and install (with professional help) emergency generators
  - vi. Inviting the fire department to come to a Post or school to provide fire safety talks
- g. Firearm Safety or NRA Class
  - i. Providing a public class on firearms safety, including home safety, safe handling and storage of firearms and ammo, and other safety practices.
  - ii. Providing hands-on range safety class
  - iii. Providing NRA Eddie Eagle firearms safety materials for youth.
- h. Recognition of Firefighter, Police Officer, EMT or Other Safety Personnel

- i. Nominating recipients
    - ii. Participating in awards ceremonies
    - iii. Publicizing outstanding first responder recognition events
  - i. Child Safety
    - i. Putting on a child-safety class for parents, including how to install wall outlet covers, child-proof locks, etc.
    - ii. Assisting with a “palms up” baby palm print program
    - iii. Promoting Amber Alert Awareness
    - iv. Assisting parents with installing child protective devices in the home
  - j. Other Safety Projects
    - i.
- 5. BUDDY POPPY
  - a. Buddy Poppy Drives (distributing poppies and taking donations)
- 6. YOUTH ACTIVITIES
  - a. Sports or Other Activities
    - i. Serving as a coach or other adult volunteer
    - ii. Donating funds to an organized youth sports league or organization
    - iii. Volunteering with a church or other organization’s sports or other youth activity
  - b. Scouting and Other Similar Organizations, CAP Eagle Scout
    - i. Scout Leader or other adult volunteer
    - ii. Donating funds or goods to a scouting program
    - iii. Providing your Post as a home to a scout group for meetings or activities
  - c. Youth Centers
    - i. Volunteering time
    - ii. Donating funds, goods or services
  - d. Special Events
    - i. Hosting or volunteering for a youth activity at a town event such as Old Home Days
    - ii. Supporting a rec center day camp as a volunteer or contributor
  - e. Education and Instruction
    - i. Teaching firearms or other safety topics to youth groups
    - ii. Distributing safety training materials to schools, churches and town or city recreation departments
  - f. Youth Recognition and Supporting our Veterans Citation
    - i. Organizing and advertising a youth recognition event
    - ii. Participating in a youth recognition event
    - iii. These events can be VFW programs or just recognizing an outstanding achievement by a youth in your community.
  - g. JrROTC Program
    - i. Donating money or using the Post to host a fund raiser such as a meat raffle in support of JrROTC



- ii. Jr ROTC Awards programs, including time to prepare the awards and presentation
    - iii. Donation of the Post for JrROTC events
  - h. School Mentor Program
    - i. Volunteering time to school-sponsored mentoring and tutoring programs
    - ii. Donating goods, services or funds to these programs
  - i. Citizenship Education
    - i. Presenting citizenship talks
    - ii. Distributing educational materials on this topic to schools, youth departments of churches, etc
  - j. Other Youth Activities
    - i. Being a Big Brother or Big Sister
    - ii. Donating to or otherwise supporting YMCA, Big Brother/Sister and similar organizations
    - iii. Helping regional or high school drama departments with putting on plays
- 7. LEGISLATIVE
  - a. Any activity a member is engaged in with regard to legislation, primarily concerning veterans, is reportable.
  - b. Other legislative activities are also reportable.
- 8. PUBLICITY
  - a. If you got your Post in the papers or on TV, report it under Publicity.
    - i. Community calendar pages showing Post activities.
    - ii. Stories about Post members or activities, including meat raffles, awards ceremonies, Veterans Day parades and ceremonies and all other Post events are reportable. If you wrote the story, claim the time taken to write it.
    - iii. If your Post places a paid ad for a Post event, it is reportable.
    - iv. If a newspaper, television or radio station reports on a Post event, it is reportable. You took a little time to read the story, so put down the minimum time (half hour), but do not claim any costs or mileage. You should claim those in the report for the event itself.
- 9. DECEASED VETERANS
  - a. Rendering Honors
    - i. Planning and/or participating in a VFW ceremony
    - ii. Participating in a military or other VFW honor ceremony or flag presentation
    - iii. Rendering honors or participating in an honor ceremony for a deceased first responder
  - b. Other Support Activity for Deceased Veteran
    - i. Assisting the family of a deceased veteran with funeral arrangements
    - ii. Providing financial or other material support for the family of a deceased veteran
    - iii. Providing assistance for the family of a veteran in obtaining VA, SSA or other benefits.

## 10. POST SERVICE OFFICER

- a. Assisting a member or other veteran with obtaining VA or other government benefits
- b. Assisting the family of a veteran with obtaining benefits.
- c. Providing training or educational materials to veterans with regard to benefits.
- d. Visiting veterans or their families to provide support or needed contact with the VFW.

## 11. HOSPITAL

- a. Hospital Reports
  - i. Reports regarding administration or planning of the Hospital Program.
- b. Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS)
  - i. Participation in the VAVS program as a volunteer
  - ii. Hours and miles to drive another who is participating in the VAVS program
  - iii. Donations of goods or services to the VAVS Program
- c. Registered Volunteer Activities
  - i. Participation in any activity as a registered volunteer in a hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice program other than VAVS or VA Hospital Bingo.
  - ii. Hours and/or miles to transport a volunteer to such a program.
- d. Hospital Christmas Party (or other holiday) Donations
  - i. Donating funds, goods or services to a hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice Christmas or other holiday party.
  - ii. Planning or participating as a volunteer at such a party.
- e. Homemade Item Donations
  - i. Time, cost and miles involved with making and delivering homemade items to patients or residents of a hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice.
  - ii. Transporting another volunteer to obtain materials or deliver finished items.
- f. Hospital Bingo and Other Visits
  - i. Participating in Hospital Bingo, including the funds provided for the bingo prizes and the mileage for all volunteers.
  - ii. Other visits to hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice patients or residents.
- g. Volunteer Recognition
  - i. Planning or participating in any event to honor or recognize hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice volunteers
  - ii. Preparing press release materials to publically recognize such volunteers.
- h. Military Suicide Awareness
  - i. Volunteering in a Military Suicide Awareness Program, including suicide hotline programs
  - ii. Donating goods or services to the Military Suicide Awareness Program
  - iii. Distributing educational materials about the program and/or the issues involved in the suicide problem.
- i. Visits to Ill or Homebound
  - i. Visiting ill or homebound veterans or non-veterans.

- ii. Providing transportation to others to visit them
    - iii. Assisting family members with hospital or homebound visits.
    - iv. Persons visited may be VFW members from the same or different post, or friends or relatives of the person visited.
    - v. Cheer visits (visits to care facilities with the permission of facility staff) to bring flowers, perform music, bring toys for children etc.
  - j. Other Hospital Reports
    - i. Visits to hospitals, nursing homes or other care facilities or hospices not covered above.
    - ii. Volunteering as a member of a hospital, nursing home or other care facility or hospice board or other committee.
    - iii. Volunteering funds, materials or services to aid such facilities.
12. Scholastic Awards and Scholarships
- a. National Teacher Award
    - i. Time and resources expended in advertising and promoting the award
    - ii. Time and resources needed to gather and evaluate submissions
  - b. Patriots Pen
    - i. Same as NTA
  - c. Voice of Democracy
    - i. Same as NTA
  - d. Young American Creative Patriotic Art
    - i. Same as NTA
  - e. Continuing Education
    - i. Same as NTA
13. (Auxiliary only)
- a. VASH Donations
    - i. Planning and/or participating in an event to raise funds to be donated.
    - ii. Donation of funds.
  - b. Donations to Veteran-Related Charity
    - i. Same as VASH
  - c. National Military Services
    - i. Same as VASH
  - d. VFW National Home for Children Donations
    - i. Same as VASH
  - e. Homeless Veteran Assistance
    - i. Same as VASH
    - ii. Donation of services, time or goods to an organization providing assistance
  - f. Adopt a Unit
    - i. Same as VASH
    - ii. Donation of items to be sent to the unit.
  - g. Other Veteran and Family Support
    - i. Other support not covered elsewhere

- h. Buddy Poppy
  - i. Distributing poppies
  - ii. Attending events where donations are taken for poppies to support VFW relief funds
- 14. CHIEF OF STAFF
- 15. Department Commander and President
  - a. Department Commander Special Project
    - i. Projects to raise funds for the project
    - ii. Participation in events related to the project itself
    - iii. Transporting other volunteers or event participants to project events
  - b. Department President Special Project
    - i. Same as Dept Commander Special Project
- 16. MEMBERSHIP
  - a. Participating in or planning events to increase membership
  - b. Other recruiting activities